

## Message Text

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64

ORIGIN EUR-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 101823

TOSEC 665

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: AFTERMATH OF ITALIAN DIVORCE REFERENDUM

1. FOLLOWING ARE OUR PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ON OUTCOME OF  
ITALIAN DIVORCE REFERENDUM MAY 12-13:

2. ITALY'S NATIONWIDE DIVORCE REFERENDUM ON MAY 12-13  
RESULTED IN A SURPRISINGLY STRONG AFFIRMATION (59-41) OF  
THE COUNTRY'S THREE AND ONE-HALF YEAR OLD DIVORCE LAW.  
WHILE THE ULTIMATE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES MAY TAKE SOME TIME  
TO UNFOLD, IT IS ALREADY CLEAR THAT STILL ANOTHER MAJOR  
EUROPEAN POLITICAL FIGURE HAS BADLY MISJUDGED THE TEMPER OF  
THE ELECTORATE. AMINTORE FANFANI, HEAD OF THE ITALIAN  
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DC), STAKED HIS POLITICAL  
PRESTIGE IN A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN AGAINST DIVORCE, AND HIS  
PARTY LEADERSHIP HAS NOW BEEN PLACED IN QUESTION. INITIAL  
INDICATIONS ARE, HOWEVER, THAT THE PARTY IS, IN DEFEAT,  
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ATTEMPTING TO CLOSE RANKS FOR A PERIOD OF STOCK-TAKING. ALL

THE LAY PARTIES, BUT PARTICULARLY THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS, HAVE BEEN GIVEN A SHOT IN THE ARM BY THEIR SUCCESS IN THE REFERENDUM. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS' COALITION PARTNERS ARE LIKELY TO BECOME MORE ASSERTIVE VIS-A-VIS THE DC. THE COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER BERLINGUER HAS SEEN HIS LEADERSHIP VINDICATED AND IS LIKELY TO PRESS ANEW HIS "HISTORIC COMPROMISE" LINE, I.E, COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN OR SUPPORT OF A GOVERNMENT COALITION WITH THE DC AND SOCIALISTS.

3. FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE WE LOOK FOR A TENDENCY TO AVOID PRECIPITATE ACTION AS THE PARTIES REFLECT ON THE REFERENDUM. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT PRIME MINISTER RUMOR'S PRESENT GOVERNMENT MAY FALL VICTIM TO A DESIRE FOR REDEFINITION OF COALITION RELATIONSHIPS OR TO A NEW-FOUND ASSERTIVENESS BY THE DC'S COALITION PARTNERS. BUT IF THIS SHOULD HAPPEN, WE WOULD EXPECT THE CENTER-LEFT PARTIES TO RE-ESTABLISH THEIR COOPERATION, FOR THE REASON THAT NO OTHER VIABLE OPTION EXISTS AT THE MOMENT. RUSH

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